



NAACP National Board
Over 101 Years of Progress in the...



June 20, 2011

Honorable Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

Over the last decade, African American communities have overcome many obstacles; however, many problems still remain. The economic downturn and slow recovery process have exacerbated unemployment rates for African American communities, and educational and technological access is failing to keep pace with the demands of the economy and the needs of underserved communities.

Through my work with the Greater Ville Neighborhood Preservation Commission and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), I have witnessed the economic challenges that African Americans and other minorities are facing during these tough economic times. As such, I am even more compelled and dedicated to supporting the political, economic, and educational progress for African Americans.

The proposed AT&T and T-Mobile merger would produce many benefits for all Americans, including African American communities. Wireless telecommunication and broadband are essential to the future of this country. Innovation will be the determining factor in the future and we must provide the opportunity for our workforce and communities to confront the challenges we face. Innovation relies on technological advancement, and there is not a more valuable and important portion of technology than broadband. Broadband connects individuals and communities to the world and fosters innovation and new ideas.

Despite the fact that broadband has been available for many years, affordability and access have hampered its ability to reach all Americans. This has meant that a considerable number of Americans, many from the African American and minority community, have been unable to harness the benefits that high speed internet offers. The proposed merger between AT&T and T-Mobile would bring high speed Internet in the form of mobile broadband 4G LTE to 97% of Americans. This merger has the potential to bring improved and more affordable pricing plans for wireless communication services.

Education is another key component needed to drive innovation and bring about positive change within our communities. With the advent of the Internet, education doesn't need to take place in a classroom. Instead, now all it takes for students to have access to education is a connection to the Internet. Educational success is a building block to a better life, whether it is in the form of higher education, vocational training, or simply broader access to knowledge.

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Online education has become an important outlet in the African American community. Improved access to high speed internet as a result of this merger can bring direct benefits to the educational prospects and attainment of Americans and the African American community.

Educational benefits translate into a stronger labor force. With a national unemployment rate above 9%, and African American unemployment around 16%, strengthening our nation's economic prospects is very important. Outside of the educational benefits brought to the labor force, the merger can have a direct positive effect on our economy. AT&T has pledged to invest over \$8 billion in the coming years to strengthen their infrastructure, and this capital influx has the potential to create many jobs.

I have worked in the telecommunications industry for 27 years as an executive and a state regulator, and served as the Founding President of the National Association of Black Telecommunication Professionals (NABTP). I understand the important role AT&T has played in strengthening the African American workforce. AT&T has a strong record of diversity hiring, and rankings from NAACP sources show that they are a recognized leader in diversity hiring practices among Fortune 500 firms.

In the coming months, you will have the opportunity to review the details and take into account a number of regulatory issues regarding this merger. In making its decision concerning this matter, I ask that the Commission consider the benefits that the proposed AT&T and T-Mobile merger will have on the African American community.

Sincerely,

Harold Crumpton

President, Greater Ville Neighborhood Preservation Commission
Board Member, National NAACP
Commissioner Emeritus, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

CC: Honorable Michael Copps
Honorable Robert McDowell
Honorable Mignon Clyburn

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